

SULLIVAN. STAUFFER. COLWELL & BAYLES. INC.

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PROCKTER PRODUCTION. INC.

THE BIG STORY

March 18.1955

9:00 - 9:30 P.M.

PRODUCTION #318

SCRIPT BY: Alvin Boretz

A.M. 9/29/54

Valerie Nicholson. Southern Pines (N.C.) PILOT

CAST

Narrator

Valerie

Dr. Perry Newton

Fran

Karl

Dr. Sam

Dr. Hal

INTERIORS

Val's living room and porch

Fran's house

Karl's cabin

Lab

Hospital room

THE BIG STORY

1.

Valerie Nicholson, Southern Pines, (N.C.) "Pilot"

Zoom
FADE IN:

Southern Pines - N.C.

1.(F) AERIAL SHOT OF
SOUTHERN PINES. ALTERNATIVE
IS LONG SHOT BUT IT MUST
INCLUDE THE LONG LEAF
PINES FOR WHICH THE TOWN
IS FAMOUS..THRUOUT THE
SOUTH.

CHAPPELL

New Simoniz Floor Wax -
the new non-scuff shine
that lasts up to 5 weeks
presents - THE BIG STORY.

NARR *NARR*

Southern Pines, ~~North~~
~~Carolina~~. Population...
five thousand.

CUT TO:

1A(F) LOOKING DOWN BROAD
STREET WITH STREET SIGN
IN F.G. SHOWING NAME SHOW-
ING NAME OF THE STREET.

With a Broad Street.

CUT TO:

1B(F) THE LIBRARY ON
BROAD STREET. MED SHOT.

A library.

CUT TO:

1C (F) A MOVIE MARQUEE. A
SHOT TO DENOTE ESCAPISM OR
GAIETY.

NARR (CONT'D)

A place for entertainment.

CUT TO:

2.(F) MED SHOT, MOORE COUNTY
HOSPITAL

(QUIETLY)

A hospital.

DISSOLVE TO:

3.(L) CU..LOOKING AT LENS OF
MICROSCOPE. WE'RE IN ~~THE~~
LAB. Perry's Office.

CUT TO:

MED CL SHOT OF LAB COATED
DR. PERRY NEWTON LOOKING
THRU MICROSCOPE. HE WITH-
DRAWS HIS EYE FROM THE
SCOPE AND LOOKS UP.
PAN WITH HIM AS HE TURNS
AND WE SEE KARL,..LATE FIFTIES..
A FARMER DRESSED FOR TOWN
..IN A STIFF SUIT. NEAT.
HE IS SITTING ON A CHAIR
ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE
ROOM. PERRY WALKS TO HIM
SLOWLY AND THEN LOOKS DOWN
ON HIM AS KARL WAITS.

PERRY

I'm sorry, Karl. (SLIGHT BEAT)

It's positive.

(KARL KEEPS LOOKING AT HIM. A FLICKER OF HIS EYES IS ALL THAT BETRAYS HIS EMOTION. HE SITS DOWN SLOWLY..LOOKS AT THE BIBLE IN HIS HAND THEN LOOKS UP AT THE DOCTOR AGAIN..THEN TAKES OFF HIS GLASSES AND BEGINS CLEANING THEM.)

NARR

A man has been sentenced.
Not to death. Not to life.
But to a strange, twilight
world..where he will be..
forever, alone.

MOVE IN ON KARL..HOLD..AND

DISSOLVE TO:

4.(F) RAILROAD STATION
ACTIVITY.

NARR

But for Southern Pines,
life goes on as always.

CUT TO:

5.(F) EXT. THE "PILOT"
BLDG. FEATURING THE SIGN.

For the eighteen hundred
people who read the
county weekly

CUT TO:

6.(L) VALERIE'S HOME. BIG ROOM. SUBSTANTIAL, COMFORTABLE. IT FACES ONTO A COLUMNED PORCH. SHE COMES IN FROM KITCHEN CARRYING A CUP OF COFFEE. SHE COMES TO A LARGE ROUND TABLE ON WHICH IS STANDARD TUPEWRITER.. MANY NOTES..AND A COPY OF THE PILOT. SHE SIPS THE COFFEE AS SHE STANDS AT THE TABLE AND LEAFS THRU THE PAPER, CHECKING ITS STORIES. DOLLY IN ON VAL.

DISSOLVE TO:

COMMERCIAL

NARR

...and for you, Valerie Nicholson, its only reporter. Because, as of this moment, here at home, you have no way of knowing that the biggest story of them all..is right here in your town.

FADE IN

7.(L) CU OF "PILOT.

HEADLINE READS: POLIO CASES
ON WANE.

PULL BACK TO SHOW PERRY
NEWTON SITTING ON VALERIE'S
PORCH LOOKING AT THE PAPER.

PERRY GETS UP AS VALERIE
COMES THRU SCREEN DOOR WITH
TRAY BEARING COFFEE AND
SOME SMALL CAKES. HE TAKES
TRAY FROM HER AND SETS IT
ON A TABLE. HE IS ABOUT
FORTY.

PERRY

You didn't have to bother,
Valerie. I only planned stay-
ing a minute.

VAL

Never mind. I appreciate your
stopping by with those figures
for my wire story. Thank
heaven it's over.

PERRY

It was rough for awhile.
Every epidemic is.

NARR

One story ends. And
another..is about to be-
gin. For this man is
Perry Newton..Public Health
Officer. And tonight, he
will break the silence
that hides your BIG STORY
~~..but only..if you make~~
~~him.~~

PERRY (CONT'D)

(PUTS DOWN HIS FILLED CUP)

Maybe soon we'll be rid of
polio...like we licked small
pox..diphtheria. What a
blessing that would be.

VAL

It'll happen.

PERRY

(TAKES A SIP AND TOASTS
HER)

Optimism.

VAL

(CORRECTING HIM WITH A TOAST)
Science.

(SHE PUTS DOWN HER CUP)

Check back, Perry. How one
by one they've been control-
ling disease. I remember, as
a child, how everyone talked
about typhoid. Scared..and
with good reason. Even today
that woman they called Typhoid
Mary is still famous. How many
people did she kill? Well..
enough. But a typhoid carrier
wouldn't start a panic today.

PERRY

(PAUSES WITH HIS CUP IN MID-AIR AND IS VERY ALERT)

Wouldn't he.

VAL

(LOOKING UP AT HIM CURIOUSLY BECAUSE OF HIS NEW ATTITUDE)

I don't think so. Your department's got tight controls on a thing like that. (SLIGHT BEAT) That's right, isn't it?

PERRY

Of course.

(PERRY AVOIDS HER EYES AND PUTS DOWN HIS CUP)

This is good coffee.

(HE STIRS THE CUP..TO BE BUSY)

VAL

Perry.

PERRY

Yes.

VAL

When I said typhoid carrier..

the way you reacted. Quick like..almost worried.

PERRY

I thought you were being a reporter.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Trying to get me unawares.
That maybe you'd heard some
loose talk.

VAL

About what.

PERRY

You don't really know any-
thing...do you.

VAL

~~But I want to, Perry..what~~

~~is it.~~ I mentioned a woman
carrier. And you answered..
saying he. Why. Why did you
mention a man. Perry...what
haven't you told me.

(HE LOOKS AT HER AND THEN
HE SLOWLY TAKES OUT A CIGARETTE,
LIGHTS IT..WATCHES THE SMOKE..
THINKS HARD AND THEN LOOKS
UP AT HER)

PERRY

We've kept this quiet for
years. But maybe it ought
to come out. Maybe it's time
people knew.

VAL

(HER EYES FASTENED TO HIM..
SHE SITS DOWN) What.

*Perry
look Val -*

PERRY

(EVENLY)

Right here. In Southern
Pines...There's a typhoid
carrier.

(AS SHE REACTS..HE NODS)

It's true.

VAL

But there..there haven't
been any cases reported.

(AN ALARMING THOUGHT) Perry..
you haven't covered them up,
have you.

PERRY

(A HALF SMILE)

No. There are no typhoid
cases. And there aren't
going to be any. It's all
because of one man...and
what he did.

(CLOSE ON PERRY AND START
BLUR)

BLUR DISSOLVE TO:

8.(L) CLOSE SHOT OF KARL
PACKING AN OLD BATTERED SUIT-
CASE. HE WEARS THE STIFF
SUIT.

WIDE ANGLE SHOT AS HE
CROSSES AND INTO ANOTHER
ROOM..DISAPPEARING FOR
A MOMENT. WE SEE WE ARE
IN A FARMHOUSE. PLAIN, POOR.
SUITCASE IS ON A TABLE USED
FOR EATING. KARL REAPPEARS
CARRYING SOME DENIM PANTS.
HE PUTS THEM IN THE SUIT-
CASE AND CLOSES THE BAG.
HE TURNS...LOOKS SLOWLY OVER
THE ROOM. THERE IS A ROCKER.
HE PUTS HIS HAND OUT TO TOUCH
IT BUT THEN WITHDRAWS IT.
KARL TURNS...LOOKS DOWN AT
A PHOTO ON A TABLE.
CU, THE PHOTO. HIS DAUGHTER.
A NICE LOOKING GIRL OF
TWENTY FIVE.
CLOSE SHOT AS HE STIFFENS,
BECOMES DECISIVE IN HIS
MOVEMENTS. HE PICKS UP
THE BAG AND STARTS TOWARD
THE DOOR. BUT IT OPENS
AND THERE IS HIS DAUGHTER.
SHE CARRIES A BAG OF GROCERIES.
SHE IS PLAINLY DRESSED AND
WEARS A MATERNITY JACKET.

SHE DOESN'T SEE THE BAG
AS SHE SMILES A GREETING
AND TURNS TO CLOSE THE
DOOR.

FRAN

Hello, Pop.

(SHE TURNS BACK INTO THE ROOM
AND SEES THE BAG. HER SMILE
GOES AND SHE DOESN'T COMPRE-
HEND. HE IS SUDDENLY LOST..
FROZEN.)

Where. Where you going.

(SHE PUTS DOWN THE GROCERIES
HURRIEDLY..STARTS COMING TO
HIM)

Pop.

KARL

(HE PUTS OUT A HAND AND
SPEAKS SHARPLY.)

Franny.

(SHE STOPS..TAKEN ABACK.
HIS VOICE IS URGENT BUT NOT
SHARP AS ABOVE)
Don't touch me, honey. Don't
even come near me.

~~FRAN~~

~~What is it. What's a matter.~~

KARL

I..I got to go away, honey.

FRAN

Where,

KARL

I didn't want to have to tell
you. Maybe in a letter..it'd
have been easier for you.

(HELPLESS) But you're here.

FRAN

(AGITATED)

Pop, what's wrong.

KARL

I been to the doctor.

FRAN

You're sick.

KARL

Not like you think. Nothing's
going to happen to me. It's
other people. Honey, I..

(LOST..HIS HANDS GO OUT
HELPLESSLY AGAIN) ..I just
don't want to hurt you.

FRAN

(PLEADING)

Pop, tell me.

KARL

(NODS)

~~All right, Franny,~~ Something
..something's happened to me.

I am sick. But in a crazy
way it's hard to understand.

~~Because~~ it scares me..

scares me, Franny to think
what I can do to people.

(SLIGHT BEAT) I'm a typhoid
carrier.

FRAN

(AN ANGUISHED CRY AND SHE
TAKES A STEP TOWARD HIM)
Pop...

KARL

(A REPRIMAND)

Stay away.

(HE IS INSTANTLY HURT AND HE
TURNS AWAY..MOVES A FEW FEET)
Touch people and I can kill
them.

FRAN

They made a mistake.

KARL

Not the doctor. You think he
wanted to tell me.

KARL (CONT'D)

To look at me and say..Karl,
there's nothing we can do for
you. Every minute you're
around people, someone can
die. (SHAKES HIS HEAD SADLY)

~~What a thing to have to tell~~
~~a man.~~

FRAN

Nothing's happened to me.

KARL

If it did..to your husband..
you..(NODS TO INDICATE HER
CONDITION)...your baby...you
think I could live. If it
happened to anyone..what
would I be but a murderer.

FRAN

Where
~~What~~ are you going to do.

KARL

I walked all the way home.
Thought it all out. Got only
one thing to do. (HE INDI-
CATES HIS BAG)
Go away.

FRAN

Where.